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Thomas Reid and the Scottish Enlightenment

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THOMAS REID

AND THE

SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT

An Exhibition to Celebrate the

200th Anniversary

of the Publication of

Thomas Reid's

Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man

1785

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Introduction

At the turn of the eighteenth century, Scotland entered a period of rapid social change. The Glorious Revolution brought the return of presbyterian church government and raised the fortunes of the Whig cause, while sowing the seeds of Episcopalian and Jacobite discontent which were eventually to flower in the uprisings of 1715 and 1745. The most significant transformations, however, followed the Act of Union of 1707. With the loss of the Scottish Parliament through the political union of Scotland with England, power shifted to men of property and to the political magnates in London and their managers north of the Tweed. Landowners consolidated their control over education and religion, and the Act of Patronage of 1712 restored to them the right to appoint ministers in the Kirk. Landed men also echoed calls for 'improvement' in both the economic and intellectual spheres, and this ideology was to be the dominant one for the rest of the century. Cultural contacts were increasing between English and Scottish savants. Figures such as David Gregory, George Cheyne, and John Arbuthnot sought their fortunes in the south, and many aspiring Scots were soon to follow in their footsteps. In turn, these expatriates sent back word of the latest ideas and literary fashions, thereby enlightening those who remained at home. A new order was thus emerging in Scotland, and we can see the consequences of these social and intellectual changes being played out most dramatically in the lives and careers of Scots like Thomas Reid.

Cases 1 and 2: Marischal and New Machar 1710-1751

Thomas Reid was born on 26 April 1710 at Strachan in Kincardineshire. His father, the Rev. Lewis Reid (1676-1762), was descended from a notable line of Presbyterian ministers and literati. His mother, Margaret Gregory (1673-1732), was a member of the distinguished Gregory family, which included a number of Scotland's most renowned men of science during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Margaret was the sister of David Gregory, successively Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh and of Astronomy at Oxford; James Gregory, who succeeded his brother David as Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh; and Charles Gregory, who was Professor of Mathematics at St. Andrews. Like her husband, she was a committed Whig and a strict Presbyterian. From the beginning, Thomas Reid's world was one of piety, learning, and loyalty to Kirk and King.

Having obtained his elementary education at the parish school in Kincardine, Reid left for the Grammar School at Aberdeen in 1718 or 1719, and from there entered Marischal College Aberdeen in October 1722. Marischal was then very different in character from what it had been only a decade earlier. In the aftermath of the Jacobite rising in the autumn of 1715, its Chancellor, the tenth Earl of Marischal, was forced to flee the country because of his exploits on behalf of the Pretender. In so doing he forfeited his title and ceased to be the head of the College, thus allowing the Crown to appropriate the patronage of the professorships. Marischal was closed during the uprising and did not re-open its doors until the autumn of 1717. In 1717 a Commission of Visitation met and deposed all of the faculty at Marischal, except for the Professor of Divinity, Thomas Blackwell. The Commission permitted Blackwell to retain his chair and appointed him

Principal of the College, presumably as a reward for his loyalty to the House of Hanover.

Following this purge of Jacobite sympathisers, a new generation of teachers came to Marischal in their stead. Colin Maclaurin was appointed to the Liddell Chair of Mathematics in 1717 and began to revive the teaching of the mathematical sciences, but, in pursuit of advancement, he had effectively stopped teaching at Marischal by 1721. The man who was perhaps most responsible for introducing new intellectual currents into the classrooms of Marischal was George Turnbull (1698-1748). Educated at Edinburgh and (like Maclaurin) an early member of the Rankenian Club, Turnbull was appointed by the Crown in 1721 to teach Greek and philosophy. Fortunately, copies of Turnbull's theses for his graduating classes of 1723 and 1726 have survived, and from them we can form a reasonably clear picture of what he was teaching students like Reid in their philosophy course.

In his theses Turnbull placed great emphasis on the analogy, based on a common divinely instituted order and design, between the moral and material spheres of the creation. For him, the study of natural philosophy was the best introduction to the study of moral philosophy, for it revealed the marks of God's providence in the laws and structure of the material world, and provided evidence for the immortality of the human soul. Because natural philosophy had these moral implications, it could be used as a weapon against irreligion, and Turnbull so used it in his theses.

Of major historical consequence was Turnbull's view that both the natural and moral sciences had to be pursued according to the same method, namely that of analysis and synthesis. As natural philosophy proceeded by experiment and analogy in the analysis of the phenomena of nature, so too, he believed, moral philosophy should be an empirical science of the phenomena and laws of the moral system. Turnbull himself exemplified his own precepts in his explicit preference for a posteriori arguments over a priori arguments in natural theology. The main inspiration for Turnbull's view of the relationship between moral and natural philosophy was Query 31 of Newton's Opticks (first published as Query 23 of the 1706 edition), especially the passage: 'And if natural Philosophy in all its Parts, by pursuing this Method [of analysis and synthesis], shall at length be perfected the Bounds of Moral Philosophy will be also enlarged'. Although Turnbull mentioned Bacon's advocacy of the experimental method, it is clear that his understanding of the method of natural philosophy was based on Newton's methodological pronouncements in the Opticks, and to a lesser extent on those in the Principia.

Among the authors cited by Turnbull in his theses we find a mixture of ancients and moderns, including Cicero, Maximus of Tyre, Socrates, the 'ancient Atheists' Anaximander, Democritus, and Leucippus, and their modern counterparts Spinoza, Hobbes, and Toland. The questions for disputation appended to Turnbull's texts indicate that he had also introduced his students to the philosophies of Locke and Descartes, and it is likely that he remarked on the ideas of Berkeley as well. By the time he graduated M.A. in the spring of 1726, Reid would therefore have been at least superficially acquainted with the doctrines of leading philosophers, both ancient and modern, and with the major philosophical controversies of his own day.

The following October, Reid began his studies for the ministry at Marischal. His first teacher was the Principal and Professor of Divinity, Thomas Blackwell. Blackwell's theological orientation differed markedly from that of his extreme Presbyterian brethren elsewhere in Scotland. In his published works Blackwell used both reason and scripture to expound what he saw as the basic truths of natural and revealed religion. He attacked not only atheists and deists but also the French mystic Antoinette Bourignon, whose writings enjoyed a degree of popularity within Episcopalian circles in Aberdeenshire and the north east of Scotland. Thus the tenor of Blackwell's theology was at least consistent with the form of rational Christianity taught by George Turnbull. After Blackwell's death in 1728, the Chair of Divinity was occupied by James Chalmers, about whom little is known.

Reid completed his course of studies in 1731, and in September of that year he was admitted to the ministry of the Church of Scotland by the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil. Reid then acted as Clerk to the Presbytery and as an occasional preacher from August 1732 until April 1733. However, family connections soon advanced his career more rapidly, for in July 1733 he returned to Marischal as the newly appointed Librarian of the College, with his salary being paid from a bequest of his distant ancestor and namesake, Thomas Reid, who had been a man of letters and a secretary to James I. Yet some irregularities in the management of this bequest prompted Reid to consider bringing a law suit against the College and the Aberdeen Town Council in 1736. Whether he did so or not is at present unclear, but he was evidently dissatisfied with his position and soon resigned.

Unfortunately we know little about Reid's intellectual development during these early years. Of the few manuscripts which survive from this period, one shows that while he was a student of divinity, he began to work through Newton's Principia in earnest. He did so with John Stewart, who had been elected to replace Colin Maclaurin in the Liddell Chair of Mathematics at Marischal in 1727. Reid and Stewart had been classmates under Turnbull, and their close friendship continued until Stewart's death in 1766. Another extant manuscript dating from the late 1720s or early 30s reflects their shared mathematical interests, and in this note Reid treats the notion of quantity in a way which foreshadows his essay in the 1748 Philosophical Transactions. Other papers suggest that he was reading the works of Francis Hutcheson at this time, and he also seems to have been keenly interested in the dispute between those natural philosophers who followed Newton in using mv as the measure of the quantity of force of moving bodies, and those who followed Newton's rival, Leibniz, in using mv^2 (vis viva). But in many ways the most revealing document is a manuscript entitled 'Minutes of a Philosophical Club 1736', which apparently records discussions carried on at a series of weekly meetings between 12 January and 9 February 1736. No other evidence for the existence of this club survives, nor do Reid's notes give any indication of its membership. Possible members would have been John Stewart and David Fordyce, who later taught philosophy at Marischal.

The members of this 'Philosophical Club' canvassed a broad range of metaphysical and moral subjects, ranging from the problem of human liberty to the question of God's activity in the natural order. Reid and his colleagues also seem to have read widely among the major philosophical texts then current, for we find references to Locke's Essay, the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, William King's De Origine Mali, and the publications of Francis

Hutcheson. Shaftesbury's Characteristicks and Joseph Butler's Analogy were probably consulted too. Significantly, there is no evidence in Reid's papers to suggest that the Club discussed the works of George Berkeley, though this apparent omission may be due to the extremely limited evidence which has survived. While serving as Librarian at Marischal, Reid thus seems to have pursued his studies in moral philosophy, mathematics, and natural philosophy and to have been active in enlightened circles in Aberdeen.

It may have been partly in connection with the conflict over his salary at Marischal that in the spring of 1736 Reid travelled with John Stewart to England, where they visited London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Their main contacts in the capital seem to have been Reid's uncle, Dr. George Reid, and Dr. Alexander Stuart, who was presumably a kinsman of John Stewart. Alexander Stuart was an active Fellow of the Royal Society, and he sponsored a visit by the Aberdonians to a meeting of the Society on 1 July 1736, where they witnessed, among other things, electrical experiments demonstrated by J.T. Desaguliers. Stuart may also have been responsible for introducing them to Martin Folkes, who was later to become the Society's President, although Reid's family connections with the Gregorys may have facilitated contact with Folkes as well. While in Oxford the travellers visited Reid's relation David Gregory, who was then Canon of Christ Church, and at Cambridge they conversed with the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, Dr. Nicholas Saunderson, who had gained celebrity for teaching sciences such as optics in spite of his blindness. Reid and Stewart seem to have encountered the irascible Master of Trinity College, Richard Bentley, and Ramsay of Ochtertyre relates that while they were at Trinity Reid deciphered a hitherto inscrutable inscription on a sun-dial, much to the annoyance of the Fellows.

Shortly after his return from England, Reid was presented with the living of the nearby parish of New Machar by King's College Aberdeen, probably through the influence of his kinsman James Gregory, the Professor of Medicine and Dean of Faculty. Immediately Reid became embroiled in a controversy concerning the right of patronage. New Machar had earlier been the subject of a contested settlement in 1729, when a 'riding committee' was appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to resolve the dispute. The subsequent behaviour of the presentee did little to endear him to his hostile flock, and this probably hardened their attitude towards intruded ministers. Reid's presentation provoked a similar confrontation between King's College and the congregation. Reid was elected unanimously at a meeting of the King's College senatus on 4 February 1737. On 10 February John Bissett, a former minister of New Machar and a leading Evangelical, delivered a sermon to the Presbytery of Aberdeen at New Machar in which he attacked the principle of patronage and reasserted the right of the congregation to elect their minister. When Reid first came to preach to his new congregation on 12 May, he was physically attacked by the parishioners, and had to be protected while he delivered his sermon from the pulpit. But Reid's conduct was such as to eventually win over the affections of the people of New Machar.

Little evidence remains of Reid's clerical activities while at New Machar. He seems to have been conscientious in fulfilling his pastoral duties, although his style of pulpit oratory was perhaps ill suited to the majority of his listeners. Ramsay of Ochtertyre recorded that 'his style of preaching was far from being popular or alluring, being clear, plain, mathematical reasoning

little indebted to voice or action'. Reid followed the common practice of the day in using sermons of others, and tradition has it that he used those of Samuel Clarke, John Tillotson, and the Dissenter John Evans, along with his own sermons (of which none survive).

Reid's selection of sermons suggests that he conforms to the picture of the Aberdeen clergy during the first half of the eighteenth century drawn by Ramsay of Ochtertyre. Ramsay observed that 'a great majority of the clergy bred at Aberdeen ... preached and prayed in a strain which neither moderate Calvinists nor moderate Arminians could have found fault with'. Interestingly, Ramsay also claimed that 'a very great majority of the northern ministers were the earliest and steadiest supporters of the moderate party'. Although Reid's party affiliations within the Kirk at this time are unknown, his theology is perhaps best characterised as that of the moderates. That is, he too probably emphasised the moral and practical aspects of Christianity, the use of reason in the examination and defence of the fundamentals of faith, and the toleration of doctrinal differences. Reid's initial theological orientation would have been in the direction of moderatism since his teachers at Marischal promoted a rational form of religion. His subsequent readings in moral philosophy, and his use of Clarke, Tillotson, and Evans, all point in this direction as well. Furthermore, his defence of man's free will distances him from the strict Calvinist doctrine of predestination, and aligns him with those members of the Kirk who advocated a polite brand of Arminianism. As far as it can be determined, Reid's religious outlook was, therefore, similar to that of the generation of moderates which included Patrick Cuming, William Leechman, and Robert Wallace.

Although Reid has traditionally been thought to have been preoccupied with Humean scepticism while at New Machar, the surviving manuscripts from this period suggest that this is an extremely limited, not to say misleading, view. Two papers related to moral philosophy are particularly important: one consists of extensive reading notes taken in 1738 from Butler's Analogy of Religion and Peter Browne's The Procedure, Extent and Limits of the Human Understanding (1728), and the other is a brief discussion of our concept of the self dated 22 October 1748. Reid's notes from Browne's Procedure show that, at this stage in his philosophical development, he did not question the existence of ideas. Rather, he defended Locke's account of abstract ideas against the criticisms of Browne and Berkeley by distinguishing between sensations, which for Reid were images of objects passively received by the mind, and ideas, which he thought were non-representational mental objects actively created by the mind. There is, therefore, direct evidence of Reid's familiarity with Berkeley's Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, although there is no indication in these notes or in any of his papers from the period 1726 to 1751 that Reid was a committed Berkelian, contrary to his later claims. Moreover, Reid's description of his philosophical development closely paralleled his view of the history of post-Cartesian philosophy, strongly suggesting that he reconstructed his own intellectual biography within the framework he used to interpret the history of philosophy more generally.

The only hint of Reid's familiarity with Hume's Treatise of Human Nature in the manuscripts dating from the years spent at New Machar is to be found in his discussion of the concept of the self. In the Treatise, Hume had argued that in so far as we lack impressions of the self, we can have no idea of it;

accordingly he substituted his own conception of the self as a mere stream of successive perceptions. Reid appears to take up Hume's argument, to which he responded:

> I seem to have no Idea of it [the self] and yet am under an invincible Necessity of believing there is some real thing. It seems one of the most natural & original principles that we continue the same individual unchanged self in all the changes vicissitudes and varietys of thought & perception.

We can see in this response the essence of the strategy which Reid was later to adopt more systematically in defending what he took to be our fundamental epistemological and moral concepts against Humean scepticism. The appeal to the necessary, presuppositional nature of basic concepts such as the self which we find in this passage was to become one of the distinctive features of Reid's mature epistemology. However, it should be emphasised that the link made here between Reid's discussion and Hume's Treatise is a highly tentative one. Thus one cannot conclude on the basis of the surviving manuscripts that Reid's own retrospective account of his intellectual development while at New Machar is essentially correct, nor can one entirely accept the view of Reid's disciple and biographer Dugald Stewart that Reid spent 'the greater part of his time ... in a careful examination of the laws of external perception, and of the other principles which form the groundwork of human knowledge'.

Far from being occupied exclusively with epistemology while at New Machar, Reid pursued a broad range of inquiries. One interest which spanned this period, and which he shared with John Stewart, was in physical and observational astronomy. Thus in November 1739 we find Reid taking notes from an English translation of Maupertuis's La Figure de la terre, and, nearly a decade later, Reid observed the eclipse of the sun on 14 July 1748, in conjunction with John Stewart and a group of Scottish observers organised in Edinburgh by Dr. Alexander Monro primus, whose results were published in the Philosophical Transactions for that year. Another shared interest with Stewart was mathematics, and there are notes extant which suggest that they jointly investigated topics treated in Stewart's Sir Isaac Newton's Two Treatises of the Quadrature of Curves, and Analysis by Equations of an Infinite Number of Terms, Explained, which was published in 1745 (though largely completed by 1742).

The most important document from the New Machar period is undoubtedly Reid's 'An Essay on Quantity', which was read before the Royal Society of London on 3 November 1748, and which appeared in that year's Philosophical Transactions. The first sketch of the 'Essay' appears to date from the 1730s, as the orthography and paper size are similar to that of the manuscripts related to the meetings of the 'Philosophical Club' in 1736. In this sketch we find all of the major themes of the published 'Essay': the attempt to define the nature of quantity in order to determine the proper objects of, and distinctive type of evidence in, mathematics, the dismissal of Francis Hutcheson's application of mathematical reasoning to morals, and the recognition that the vis viva dispute was based on differences over the correct definition of the moving force of bodies. Reid entitled this sketch 'Concerning the Object of Mathematicks', and it was only in a subsequent draft that he changed this to 'Essay Concerning the Object of Mathematicks

occasioned by reading a piece of Mr. Hutchesons where Virtue is measured by simple & Compound Ratios'. It may be, therefore, that Reid's later title is a misleading guide to the genesis of the 'Essay', and that his ideas about quantity initially evolved out of earlier studies in his mathematics, and were then applied to the problems of vis viva and to Hutcheson's moral calculus.

The question of origins aside, the surviving drafts of the 'Essay' contradict Dugald Stewart's claim that this work 'shews plainly ... that, although [Reid] had not entirely relinquished the favourite researches of his youth [i.e., mathematics], he was beginning to direct his thoughts to other objects'. Throughout his early career Reid ranged widely through mathematics, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy, and the 'Essay on Quantity' reflects both the diversity and the interplay of his inquiries. However, it does not, pace Stewart, suggest any shift in the focus of Reid's intellectual interests. Nor was the 'Essay' an imperfect representation of Reid's studies at New Machar, as Reid's later biographer A. Campbell Fraser asserted. Campbell Fraser's assessment was premised on the belief that Reid was completely preoccupied with Humean scepticism in the years following the publication of the Treatise, but such a view is highly misleading. Once the traditional picture of Reid's philosophical development assumed by Campbell Fraser is rejected, we can see that the 'Essay' tells us much about Reid's 'favourite researches' prior to his move to King's College.

Cases 3 and 4: King's College 1751 - 1764

At a meeting of senatus on 25 October 1751, the faculty of King's College unanimously elected Reid to succeed the late Alexander Rait as Regent in Philosophy. When approached by an official delegation from King's bringing him news of his election, Reid initially declined, because 'it was his intention to live retired in the country till he should complete some literary plans which then occupied his thoughts'. But he was prevailed upon by his wife and the delegation to accept, which he did formally on 22 November of that year.

Once removed to Old Aberdeen, Reid immersed himself in the administrative affairs of King's and in his teaching. He played an influential role in the committee struck in 1753 to revise the curriculum and the college statutes, and he was active in 1754 in the negotiations surrounding the proposed union of King's and Marischal. Reid was also elected on various occasions to represent the College in the General Assembly, where he may have conversed with Moderate churchmen such as Hugh Blair, who later acted as an intermediary between Reid and David Hume. Reid too became embroiled in college politics and was a member of a cabal which repeatedly opposed the plans of the Principal, John Chalmers. The conflict between them reached such a pitch that when Lord Deskford accepted the Chancellorship of the College in June 1761, he wrote: 'my first duty I apprehend to be, to endeavour by mediation to make up all Differences, that may at present subsist among the members of the University'.

As a Regent, Reid was responsible for teaching his students throughout the whole of their three-year course of philosophy. After the curriculum reforms of 1753, this meant that he lectured on natural history the first year, natural philosophy the second, 'the Philosophy of the Human mind and the Sciences that Depend upon it [i.e., logic, rhetoric, natural law, politics,

economics, the fine arts, and natural religion]' during the third year, and mathematics for the first two years of the course. From his manuscripts we know that his natural history prelections included basic historical, geographical, and geological information, as well as materials on the classification of minerals, vegetables, and animals, comparative anatomy, and the physiology of plants, animals, and man. A relatively complete set of student notes from his natural philosophy course shows that he lectured on mechanics, astronomy, cohesion, magnetism, electricity, hydrostatics, pneumatics, and optics, following the standard format of physics textbooks produced in the first half of the eighteenth century, such as those by Desaguliers, 'sGravesande, and Rowning. In his mathematics classes, he began with elementary geometry and algebra, and ended with an introduction to Newton's fluxional calculus. The final year of teaching was seemingly taken up largely with the analysis of the intellectual and active powers of the mind, and it was in these lectures that Reid developed his critique of David Hume and the theory of ideas.

While teaching at King's, the contents of Reid's lectures on the mind seem to have changed, partly because of the curriculum reforms, and partly because of the rapid development which Reid's epistemology apparently underwent after he began lecturing. An important clue to the chronology of his disenchantment with the theory of ideas comes in the following passage written in 1759:

> Formerly I suspected, but now I know for certain, that the philosophy of the human mind, even though it has been subjected to study by excellent intellects in this generation and in the previous century, has yet right up to the present time been enveloped in darkness and based on hypotheses and fancies of the human mind rather than on an accurate analysis of the operation of the understanding.

This passage suggests that whatever doubts Reid may have entertained about the theory of ideas prior to 1751, he did not develop them into a systematic critique of that theory until he began his teaching career. We have seen that there is little evidence that Reid was totally preoccupied with the theory of ideas and Humean scepticism while at New Machar. Reid may have been referring to his intention to pursue his doubts concerning that theory when he spoke of his 'literary plans' to the deputation from King's which informed him of his election as Regent, but such an interpretation of his remarks is entirely speculative.

Further evidence for the chronology of Reid's reaction to Hume and the theory of ideas is to be found in the dedication to his An Inquiry into the Human Mind, where he wrote that he had 'never thought of calling in question the principles commonly received with regard to the human understanding, until "The Treatise of Human Nature" was published in the year 1739'. He continued:

> My thoughts upon this subject were, a good many years ago, put together in another form, for the use of my pupils, and afterwards were submitted to the judgment of a private philosophical society, of which I have the honour to be a member.

Thus while Hume's Treatise may have initially provoked his doubts about the veracity of the theory of ideas, Reid's critique of that theory was systematically developed in the 1750s because of his duties as a Regent at King's and the stimulus of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society. Reid underlined the catalytic effect of his appointment at King's when he said that the 'leisure of an academical life' and 'the duty of my profession, which obliged me to give prelections on these subjects [i.e., the powers of the mind]' led him to observe with great care the operations of his own mind. The available evidence suggests, therefore, that contrary to the accepted view of the evolution of Reid's epistemology, his critique of the theory of ideas and Humean scepticism was explicitly and systematically formulated after his move to King's College in 1751 when he was confronted with the task of teaching a course on the philosophy of mind. Whether Reid's first course of lectures prior to 1753 included any critical reflections on the theory of ideas we cannot now determine, but by the mid-1750s it would seem that Reid had begun to attack the theory and its sceptical consequences in the classroom.

As Reid indicated in the above quotation from the Inquiry, he also aired his criticisms of Hume and the theory of ideas before the more informed audience of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society. The Wise Club, as the Society was popularly known, was founded in January 1758 by three university men (Reid, his kinsman John Gregory, who was then the Professor of Medicine at King's, and John Stewart), the physician David Skene, and two ministers, Robert Trail and George Campbell (who became Principal of Marischal College in 1759). Four further members were elected soon after: the Humanist at King's, Thomas Gordon; the professor of Moral Philosophy at Marischal, Alexander Gerard; the Minister of Nigg, John Farquhar; and John Ross, later appointed Professor of Oriental Languages at King's. To this nucleus James Beattie and Dr. George Skene were added in 1761, following their election at Marischal to the Professorships of Moral and Natural Philosophy respectively, and in 1763 William Ogilvie, who was then Assistant Regent at King's. While there is no evidence that Reid was largely responsible for the formation of the Society, as previous historians such as James McCosh have claimed, he was one of the most active members and served as the club's first secretary.

Reid's contributions well reflect the diversity of topics discussed at the meetings of the Wise Club. He proposed questions on plant nutrition, on the distinction between impressions and ideas, on the education of children, on increasing the birth rate (and hence the labour force) through proper legislation, and on various moral and ethical themes to which he later returned in his Essays on the Active Powers of Man. A number of Reid's questions on a variety of subjects were explicitly addressed to Hume's writings, and it would appear that the Club spent a considerable amount of its time debating the merits of the 'true old Humean philosophy'. Even though Hume's doctrines were defended as well as attacked by members of the Society, part of the distinctiveness of the Aberdeen Enlightenment lies in the fact that its leading savants attempted to answer Humean scepticism by developing an epistemological alternative to the theory of ideas which could serve as the basis for a rational form of Christianity. Alexander Gerard was the first to reply publicly to Hume in his The Influence of the Pastoral Office on the Character Examined (1760), and he was soon followed by George Campbell, Reid, and John Gregory. The epistemological appeal to common

sense was most fully explored by Reid, Gregory, David Skene, and, slightly later, James Beattie. The philosophical tradition initiated at Aberdeen by George Turnbull thus bore fruit in this collective response to the works of David Hume.

Most of the formal papers which Reid delivered to the Society were taken up with the analysis of the human senses, and these served as the basis for the text of the Inquiry. Of the remainder, one was the sole mathematical paper given during the years of Reid's membership: this was his presidential discourse of 1762 on the definitions and axioms of Euclid's Elements, in which he endeavoured to rectify Euclid's problematic treatment of parallel lines. Although Reid may have been interested in this question prior to the 1750s, his teaching responsibilities and the publication of Robert Simson's edition of the Elements in 1756 prompted him to attempt to place the doctrine of parallel lines on a firmer footing. Reid continued to work on this problem until the early 1770s, when he resolved 'to give up the Consideration of this Subject; having spent more time and thought in attempting to prove the simple properties of Streight [sic] lines from some one definition or Axiom than I can own without shame'.

Reid also read a paper in July 1761 on the transit of Venus, which had occured on 6 June of that year, and which had occasioned intense international interest because of the opportunity it gave astronomers to determine the absolute dimensions of the solar system. The Wise Club was probably one of the first groups in Britain to make preparations for the transit, as it deliberated on how best to carry out and interpret the observations of the phenomena at a meeting held on 12 April 1758. By contrast, the Royal Society did not discuss the matter until June 1760, when it was provoked into action by the receipt of a memoir on the transit by the French astronomer Delisle. In the event, the realisation of the Club's plans was anticlimactic. Along with 'several witnesses and particularly three or four members of [the] Society', Reid observed the transit using a nine-foot refracting telescope, but he was able to take only three sightings of the position of Venus because of adverse weather conditions. Consequently, Reid could not calculate the parallax of the sun in his paper, although he did discuss the theory of the motion of Venus and the problem of ascertaining the exact longitude of Aberdeen. Given his later interest in the question of aberration, it is significant that he also attempted to explain the discrepancies between his observations and the relevant data in Edmond Halley's astronomical tables in terms of the progressive motion of light. After reading his paper to the Club, Reid kept abreast of the reports of the transit published in the Philosophical Transactions, and he seems to have done further work on the interpretation of the data which he was thus able to obtain. These two papers on astronomy and the foundations of geometry, as well as those on the human senses and the questions Reid proposed for debate, display the diversity of both the proceedings of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society and Reid's intellectual interests.

Another group linked to King's College with which Reid was affiliated was the coterie of agricultural improvers known as the Gordon's Mill Farming Club. The Club was founded in December 1758 by the Principal of King's, John Chalmers, and his colleagues John Gregory, George Gordon, Thomas Gordon, Roderick McLeod, and George Middleton, along with various improving landlords. Others who attended subsequent meetings and contributed to

the Club prior to its demise in 1765 included two of the North East's leading agricultural improvers, Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk and Robert Barclay of Ury near Stonehaven. After being present at the inaugural meeting of the Club, Reid attended its gatherings infrequently. It may have been that he was too busy with the Aberdeen Philosophical Society to devote much of his time to the Farming Club, or that personal conflicts with some of the members from King's College made him disinclined to participate. Nonetheless, the Club consulted him about miscellaneous matters, such as the use of lime manures, the distillation of potatoes, the design of harnesses and farm vehicles, and the keeping of farm accounts. Although Dugald Stewart characterised Reid's interests in gardening and botany as being merely ornamental and recreational, it is clear that Reid was prompted by the ideology of improvement and his own philosophical preoccupations to give serious consideration to the practice of agriculture. As for the Club itself, even though it achieved little in reforming the time-honoured habits of local farmers, it did succeed in lobbying for the establishment of a corn market in Aberdeen and for the creation of standardised weights and measures, and its existence attests to the importance of agricultural improvement as a component of the Aberdeen Enlightenment.

Reid's major published work from the King's College years was his An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense, which appeared in the spring of 1764 and was dedicated to his patron, James Ogilvy, Lord Deskford. Reid's principal aim in the Inquiry was to refute the theory of ideas, which he believed led directly to the subversive form of scepticism advanced by Hume. To do so, Reid drew heavily on the methodological resources of the Newtonian corpus. He argued that the theory of ideas was a mere 'hypothesis', and he echoed Roger Cotes's attack on Cartesian vortices when he claimed that ideas could not adequately explain the processes of perception and that the existence of ideas had never been proven by advocates of that theory. He also asserted that the proponents of the hypothesis of ideas denied basic facts about human nature, and employing Newtonian rhetoric Reid concluded that 'these facts are phenomena of human nature, from which we may justly argue against any hypothesis, however generally received. But to argue from a hypothesis against facts, is contrary to the rules of true philosophy.' Furthermore, following Newton's example Reid proposed an experimentum crucis, which he believed demonstrated that 'the ideal system is a rope of sand, and [that] all the laboured arguments of the skeptical philosophy ... proceed upon a false hypothesis'. Reid thus deployed various Newtonian methodological strategies to great effect against the theory of ideas, and exemplified thereby the methodological reform which he hoped to effect in the study of the human mind. For ultimately Reid sought to establish what he called the 'anatomy of the mind' along the lines of those sciences which he believed had been given definitive form by Newton, namely mechanics, astronomy, and optics.

One of the most noteworthy features of the Inquiry is the mixture of what we would now call science and philosophy in the text. Historians of eighteenth-century science are becoming increasingly aware that the configurations of intellectual activity in this period do not correspond to those of the present, and it is arguable that the study of the mind in the Enlightenment is a prime example of a past practice which cannot be straightforwardly assimilated into current disciplinary categories. Reid's analysis of vision in the Inquiry illustrates clearly the close connections between the physiology

and the philosophy of perception in the eighteenth century. Because optics was then thought to encompass the investigation of the behaviour of light and the process of vision, the boundaries between physical optics, the physiology of the perceptual system, and the 'philosophical' examination of our visual ideas were extremely fluid. Viewed against the background of eighteenth-century optics, we can appreciate why the chapter 'Of Seeing' in the Inquiry covered the range of topics that it did, as Reid there took up problems treated by writers on optics. This underlines the fact that Reid did not demarcate the boundary between science and philosophy as we now do, precisely because his understanding of the study of vision was rooted in the medical and optical literature of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This implies, moreover, that for Reid the theory of ideas was not simply a 'philosophical' explanation of perception in our sense of the term, but that it was embedded in a broader theoretical context, having important connections with physiology. This is borne out in the Inquiry by Reid's critique of physiological explanations of vision premised on the theory of ideas, where he argued that physiologists like William Briggs had proposed misguided explanations of the structure and function of the optic nerves because they had been misled by the 'hypothesis' of ideas. The approach to the study of the human senses adopted in the Inquiry was, therefore, modelled on the contemporary definition of optics, and consequently displays a combination of 'philosophy' and 'science' characteristic of Reid's thought more generally.

Cases 5 to 8: Glasgow 1764-1796

Prior to 1764 Reid's reputation as a man of learning probably extended little beyond the north east of Scotland. Marischal College honoured him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1762, but this was a gesture of local, not to say parochial, recognition. Otherwise, his 'Essay on Quantity' had gone virtually unnoticed and, so far as we know, he was not invited to become a member of any major learned society outside of Aberdeen. In 1764, however, Reid's hitherto retired life as a provincial savant ended. The publication of the Inquiry aroused the interest of the literati in Britain and abroad, and his election to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow placed him in one of the most distinguished Chairs of Philosophy in Europe, which had been previously occupied by Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith.

Far from being due to 'unsolicited favour' as Dugald Stewart claimed, Reid's election to the Glasgow Chair was effected by the combined interests of Lord Deskford and Henry Home, Lord Kames, whom Deskford had introduced to Reid in 1763. On 8 November 1763 Adam Smith had announced his intention to resign, and the following January he recommended that one of the Glasgow Divinity students, Thomas Young, serve as his substitute for the remainder of the session. Young was duly selected by the Faculty, and his election to the Chair would have been assured had he been nominated by Smith. However, Smith apparently did not do so, thus opening the way for Kames and Deskford to cultivate interest on Reid's behalf. Reid's patrons exercised their influence through contacts on the Glasgow faculty, and it would seem that they made representations to men such as the Lord Privy Seal for Scotland, James Stuart Mackenzie, the younger brother of the King's Prime Minister, Lord Bute, without whose blessing Reid's candidacy would

have undoubtedly failed. Because of the exertions of Kames and Deskford, the election was a closely fought one. Senate met on 5 May and postponed voting for seventeen days, a sign that there were serious disagreements over the respective merits of the candidates. These were evidently resolved by the time the second meeting was held on 22 May, since Reid was elected Professor by 'a great majority'. We see, then, that Reid's appointment to the Glasgow Chair well illustrates the patronage system at work in eighteenth-century Scotland.

As at King's College, Reid was a busy administrator and teacher in Glasgow. Inevitably his various administrative duties involved him in the numerous and sometimes acrimonious faculty disputes which punctuated his term as Professor. One such dispute concerned the respective powers of Senate and Faculty; begun in 1761 it was only resolved in 1771 by a Court of Session ruling. Reid was, perhaps, an unwilling participant in this skirmish, for he wrote to his friend David Skene in December 1765 that 'our society is not so harmonious as I wish. Schemes of interest, pushed by some and opposed by others, are like to divide us into parties, and ... engage us in lawsuits'. However, Reid played an active part in challenging the competence of the College factor Matthew Morthland, and the conflict which ensued was eventually settled in the early 1780s after roughly a decade of faculty in-fighting. This particular academic fracas achieved a degree of public notoriety, for in 1778 Reid's ally, the Professor of Natural Philosophy, John Anderson, published many of the relevant documents in a lengthy collection entitled Process of Declarator MDCCLXXV, Concerning the Management of the Revenue of Glasgow College.

Despite the generally strained relations among the faculty, Reid grew close to certain of his colleagues, especially those teaching the natural sciences. Reid managed to form a solid friendship with John Anderson, and was one of the few members to do so, as the numerous university squabbles made Anderson increasingly contemptuous of most of his fellow Professors. Another figure linked to Reid and to Anderson was the Professor of Practical Astronomy, Alexander Wilson. Given Reid's earlier interests in observational and physical astronomy, it is not surprising that soon after his arrival he, along with Anderson and others, collaborated with Wilson in observing the transit of Venus which occured in 1769. Wilson's son and successor Patrick also shared Reid's friendship, and the two of them investigated the problem of aberration in the 1770s and 80s. It was perhaps through the Wilsons that Reid became acquainted with the Foulis brothers, to whom they supplied type for the noted Foulis Press, and with the University instrument maker James Watt.

Successive lecturers in chemistry provided Reid with companionship and intellectual inspiration. Reid's correspondence shows his excitement over Joseph Black's theory of latent heat, and his enthusiasm prompted him to attend Black's last series of Glasgow lectures in 1765-6, when they conversed informally about miscellaneous chemical topics. John Robison faced the daunting task of succeeding Black, and Reid reported to one of his correspondents that Robison acquitted himself well. After Robison left Glasgow in 1769, they apparently lost touch with one another until the 1780s, when they exchanged letters and discussed various scientific matters. Robison's main rival for the chemistry lectureship in 1766 was another ex-student of Black's, William Irvine. Bitterly disappointed with the result of the election,

Irvine decided to leave Glasgow, but Reid and others intervened. At their instigation, a lectureship in materia medica was created for Irvine, and he took over the teaching of chemistry as well when Robison departed for the court of Catherine the Great of Russia. Apart from passing references in Reid's correspondence suggesting that he and Irvine were regular companions, we unfortunately know little about their relationship in the years following the events of 1766. Finally, the aged Reid was befriended by Thomas Charles Hope, who later succeeded Black in the Edinburgh Chemistry Chair, and by Robert Cleghorn, who also served as personal physician during Reid's last illness. Hope was an enthusiastic convert to the theories of Lavoisier and seems to have encouraged Reid's blossoming interest in French chemistry in the late 1780s and early 90s.

Among the Arts Professors, Reid's closest associate was, perhaps, the Professor of Logic, George Jardine. Having travelled to Paris in 1772 as tutor to the son of Baron Mure of Caldwell, Jardine was able to inform Reid about intellectual fashions in the French capital, and they later joined together to promote various philanthropic projects in Glasgow. Their collaboration gives credence to Dugald Stewart's remark that Jardine 'for many years, lived in habits of the most confidential intimacy with Dr. Reid and his family'. Reid also enjoyed a somewhat ambivalent relationship with the distinguished Professor of Civil Law, John Millar. Millar was deeply imbued with the principles of the 'true old Humean philosophy', and apparently defended Hume against Reid's criticisms in the meetings of the Glasgow Literary Society. Yet Millar and Reid shared similar political sentiments, and both were active in the anti-slavery movement and in political groups sympathetic to the French Revolution. During his years in Glasgow, Reid's interests and activities were thus shaped and stimulated by this circle of savants.

No doubt Reid's teaching responsibilities were at times a welcome respite from the frequent, lengthy, and faction-ridden Faculty meetings. At Glasgow Reid divided his course of moral philosophy into three main parts: pneumatology, ethics, and politics. His lectures on pneumatology covered the intellectual and active powers of the mind, the immateriality and immortality of the soul, and the being and attributes of God. Ethics he subdivided into two sections, speculative and practical. In his prelections on speculative ethics he dealt in more detail with the moral and active powers of the mind, and reviewed the major theories of morals proposed by both ancient and modern writers. In his lectures on practical ethics he dwelt on the four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice (i.e., jurisprudence), the duties of natural religion, and the laws of nations, outlining throughout man's rights as a rational and social being. Under the heading of politics, Reid examined the basic forms of government as outlined by Montesquieu, the merits of the British constitution, and the various facets of economic theory. As taught by Reid, the moral philosophy course differed significantly from those given by his predecessors. Whereas Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith had concentrated on ethics, jurisprudence, and politics, Reid devoted most of his lectures to pneumatology, partly because of its centrality in his scheme of the sciences, and perhaps partly due to his own interests, inclination, and previous preparation.

Reid's 'private' course offered to advanced students similarly differed from those offered in the past by Hutcheson and Smith. Hutcheson's

prelections were essentially commentaries on the works of the ancient moralists, and Smith had expounded the principles of taste and rhetoric, and surveyed the history of philosophy. Reid chose to focus on what he called 'the Culture of the Human Mind' (that is, the improvement of our rational and moral faculties), the connections between mind and body, and the fine arts, especially that of eloquence. In his private class, he was thus primarily concerned with the practical application of his philosophical principles. Taken as a whole, Reid's lectures therefore represent a new departure at Glasgow. Hitherto the science of the mind had received only cursory treatment in the moral philosophy course; with Reid it became the subject of systematic study and extended exposition.

Upon reaching the Biblical age of three-score years and ten, Reid retired from teaching. Following his recommendation, the Faculty elected Archibald Arthur as his assistant and Professor-designate in May 1780. It is said that Arthur was unaware of Reid's intention to nominate him, but this is highly unlikely. Tradition has it that Reid was first impressed by Arthur's performance as College Chaplain; on hearing one of his sermons, Reid is said to have commented to an unnamed colleague 'this is a very sensible fellow, and, in my opinion, would make a good Professor of Morals'. Reid also had ample opportunity to assess Arthur's merits as College Librarian and as a member of the Glasgow Literary Society. Philosophically, Arthur was initially greatly influenced by his teacher Adam Smith, but he was eventually converted by Reid. Politically Reid and Arthur shared similar Whiggish sentiments. The evident intellectual sympathy between the two men and Arthur's efficient dispatch of his College responsibilities were no doubt the deciding factors in Reid's deliberations concerning his successor. By choosing Arthur, he ensured that the principles of common sense, moderation, and liberalism would continue to be instilled in the minds and hearts of future generations of students.

After his retirement from teaching Reid remained active in college administration, and otherwise occupied himself with revising his lectures for publication and delivering papers to the Glasgow Literary Society. Founded in 1752, the Literary Society was composed largely of university men, who were joined at various time by local physicians, lawyers, ministers, merchants, and the gentry. Being so closely associated with the College, the Society's institutional life followed the rhythms of the academic calendar. By the time Reid was elected a member in 1764, the meetings began in November, once the session was fully underway, and finished in May at the end of classes. Faculty politics also spilled over into the Society. A gap in the minutes from February 1773 to November 1776 suggests that the meetings of the Society were suspended during this period, especially as it corresponds to the turbulent years in which the College was divided over the handling of the university accounts. A procedural dispute which flared up in December 1778 can also be related to long-standing rivalries among the faculty, as the cabal of Reid, Anderson, Arthur, and Irvine wrangled with their fellow members over the trivial issue of whether to adjourn the Society for the Christmas vacation.

In spite of such altercations, the Literary Society served as Glasgow's most important general forum for intellectual discussion and debate during the late eighteenth century. Reid's contributions were wide-ranging and, as in the Wise Club, the discourses he delivered were largely taken up with

abstract philosophical issues, whereas the questions he proposed were on the whole more timely and topical. From 1765 to 1779 his discourses were concerned with topics dealt with in his lectures and subsequently included in his two volumes of Essays. Those devoted to the intellectual powers of the mind were read between 1765 and 1770; from 1776 to 1779 he dwelt on the active powers, discoursing on the origins of our concept of active power, the will, and the principles of action in the mind. The questions which he proposed during this period covered a variety of subjects, from warehousing grain, interest rates, and the regulation of prices, to the format of library catalogues. Although the records of the Society for the years 1779 to 1794 have not survived, we know from Reid's manuscripts that he gave papers on the freedom of the will and on Joseph Priestley's materialism, and he appears to have given a discourse on Euclid's Elements in this period as well. Finally, in 1794 he spoke on 'the Utopian System of Government', and in 1795 he read his last disquisition, on muscular motion, before the Society.

Reid's papers on free will and materialism reflect his preoccupation with the ideas of Joseph Priestley during the latter stages of his philosophical career. The conflict between the two men began in 1774, when Priestley announced in the third part of his Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion that he planned to publish a critical review of what he called the 'ill-founded and dangerous' principles advanced by Reid and his compatriots Oswald and Beattie. In April of that year Priestley also sent letters to each of the Scottish savants giving personal notice of his intentions. Oswald and Beattie acknowledged Priestley's communication, but Reid refrained from replying. Prompted by the letter, however, he looked through the first two volumes of Priestley's Institutes and followed up Priestley's glowing references to David Hartley's Observations on Man. Priestley's Examination of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald duly appeared in the late summer of 1774, and he presented each of them with a copy of the work. For his part, Reid discussed the Examination with his Glasgow colleagues and followed the reviews and the correspondence about it in periodicals such as the London Chronicle, but he did not respond in print at this time.

In 1775 Priestley published his Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, his aim being to make Hartley's system 'more intelligible, and the study of it more inviting'. Priestley prefaced this edited version of Part One of the Observations with three introductory essays in which he attempted to clarify and defend Hartley's physiology and associationist psychology. For the first time in print, he here suggested that all of man's mental powers arose from the 'organical structure' of the brain. Rejecting Hartley's vestigial dualism, Priestley argued that sciences such as chemistry had revealed that matter was subject to more than merely mechanical laws, and that this lent credence to Locke's claim that 'a capacity of thinking might be given to matter'. Roused by this reinterpretation of Hartley, Reid soon prepared a lengthy critique of Priestley's views and angrily denounced the Dissenter's materialist hypothesis, exclaiming 'How would Epicurus? How would Hobbes? How would Collins have triumphed had they lived to see this point given up to them, even by a Christian Divine?'

Reid probably read Priestley's Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit (1777) and the exchanges between Priestley and Richard Price published as A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity (1778) shortly after they appeared, and he seems to have followed the reviews

of Priestley's works. In the period immediately following his retirement, Reid formulated the replies to Priestley's criticisms of the Inquiry and the objections to the Dissenter's necessitarianism which he published in the Essays on the Intellectual Powers and the Essays on the Active Powers respectively. Reid also returned to his attack on Priestley's materialism, and in the early 1780s read three discourses on the subject before the Glasgow Literary Society, which he later revised to form the important unpublished tract, 'Some Observations on the Modern System of Materialism'. Then, at the end of the decade, it seems that Reid gave two final discourses related to Priestley's matter theory, before turning his attention to other topics. We see, then, that in the 1770s and 80s Joseph Priestley replaced David Hume as Reid's primary philosophical adversary and that the Dissenter elicited major statements by Reid on materialism and the problem of free will.

Not all of Reid's energies were, however, devoted to purely intellectual pursuits during his retirement. Like some of his university colleagues, he was deeply interested in the commercial affairs of the city, and he was closely associated with a number of Glasgow's leading businessmen. Among the various local projects and philanthropic organisations he supported, perhaps the most significant was the founding of the Glasgow Infirmary. Reid actively promoted the scheme launched in 1787 to build an infirmary, and under a Royal Charter of 1791 he was appointed one of the governing managers. Apart from his formal duties, he visited the wards and apparently distributed money personally to the patients. Politically, he seems to have allied himself with the anti-slavery movement in the late 1780s, and he welcomed the French Revolution in its early stages. Together with John Millar, Reid joined the Glasgow Friends of Liberty and acted as a convener at their dinner meeting held on 14 July 1791 to mark the anniversary of the Revolution. Despite the personal antagonism his political sympathies aroused, he continued to support publicly the French cause by contributing an unknown sum to the National Assembly in 1792, much to the distress of some of his Aberdeen acquaintances. But, like many other liberals in Britain, he became disillusioned with the Revolution in the aftermath of the Terror, and he dissociated himself from the more extreme varieties of radicalism which began to appear in Scotland. Nevertheless, Reid remained committed to moderate political reform at a time when Dundas and his Tory henchmen were trying their best to equate it with treason and sedition.

By the time of his death on 7 October 1796, Reid's influence and reputation had grown enormously from what it had been when he left Aberdeen to take up the Glasgow chair. In December 1778 he was invited to correspond with the savants of the Académie des Sciences, and in 1783 he was elected a Fellow of the newly chartered Royal Society of Edinburgh. His Inquiry enjoyed wide currency in Britain and was translated into French and German in the 1780s. But Reid's two Essays were to have greater intellectual impact, even though they were not as popular with the general reading public. Early reviewers of the two Essays noted that together they formed a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the powers of the mind, and these characteristics made them ideally suited for use as university textbooks. Thus as early as 1793 both Essays were published together in America, and similar Scottish editions soon followed. Moreover, Reid's ideas were propagated by men such as his colleague George Jardine, his kinsman James Gregory, and his self-appointed disciple Dugald Stewart, who held the prestigious Edinburgh Chair of Moral Philosophy from 1785 to 1820. It was

Stewart who first delineated Reid's historical image in his 'Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid' and other works, and, despite minor changes in the nineteenth century, Stewart's image continues to shape our perception of the life and work of Thomas Reid.

Conclusion

What, then, does Thomas Reid's career tell us about the Scottish Enlightenment? Modern scholarship has largely focused on the institutions and intellectuals of Edinburgh, and it is only by studying the careers of savants such as Reid that we can broaden our understanding of the Enlightenment in its Scottish context. As we have seen, Reid was a leading figure in enlightened circles in Aberdeen, and his years there tell us much about the intellectual and social character of the North East in this period. Similarly, Reid's activities help to illuminate the nature of enlightened culture in Glasgow during the second half of the eighteenth century. What is immediately apparent in both contexts is the important role played by science and scientism, and this feature of the Aberdeen and Glasgow Enlightenments challenges current assumptions about the essential characteristics of the Scottish Enlightenment more generally. Finally, Reid's work provides unique insights into the interaction of science and philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment, and highlights the need to pay more attention to the map of knowledge which then prevailed. In particular, Reid's 'anatomy of the mind' suggests that scholars should reconstruct with more historical sensitivity the science of the mind as it was practised in eighteenth-century Scotland.

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Items displayed

Case 1

1. John Locke. An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding. London: Printed by E. Holt for T. Basset, 1690.

   Locke's Essay contained a number of highly controversial passages, none more so than the section wherein he argued that God could 'superadd' the power of thought to matter (p. 270). Locke's argument was widely cited by heterodox thinkers in the eighteenth century, including Anthony Collins, Lord Bolingbroke, and Joseph Priestley.

2. Sir Isaac Newton. Opticks; or, A Treatise on the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light. The second edition, with additions. London: W. and J. Innys, 1718.

   In the Enlightenment the Queries appended to Newton's Opticks were used to legitimate diverse intellectual positions. Reid's teacher George Turnbull quoted from Newton's remarks on method in Query 31 to justify his own projected methodological reform of the moral sciences, and Turnbull's ideas on methodology had a lasting influence on Reid.

   (Stillman Drake Collection.)

3. George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous. London: Printed by G. James, for H. Clements, 1713.

   Although Reid's claim that he once 'embrace[d] the whole of BERKELEY'S system' should be treated with scepticism, he nevertheless owed Berkeley an enormous intellectual debt. This copy of Berkeley's Dialogues was once owned by William Ogilvie, brother of Reid's patron Lord Deskford, and by Reid himself.

4. Sir Isaac Newton. Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica. Londini: Jussu Societatis Regiae ac typis J. Streater, 1687.

   According to Reid, Newton had placed the study of light on firm foundations, and Reid regarded both the Principia and the Opticks as exemplary models of scientific inquiry. Reid later lectured at King's College Aberdeen on the derivation of the laws of reflection and refraction found in Book I of Newton's Principia.

5. René Descartes. Principia Philosophiae. Amstelodami: Apud L. Elzevirium, 1644.

   Following Newton and his early disciples, Reid repeatedly attacked the Cartesian theory of vortices as being a prime example of an unsubstantiated hypothesis. Moreover, Reid regarded the Cartesian search for the efficient causes of natural phenomena as being completely misguided.

6. George Turnbull. A Treatise on Ancient Painting, Containing Observations on the Rise, Progress, and Decline of that Art amongst

the Greeks and Romans. London: Printed for the Author, and sold by A. Millar, 1740.

Satirised by William Hogarth in his print 'Beer Lane', George Turnbull's Treatise was one of a series of works he published in the 1730s and 40s. Neglected by most historians of the Scottish Enlightenment, Turnbull helped to spread enlightened ideas and ideals in the North East, and initiated a distinctive philosophical tradition in Aberdeen.

(Loaned by P.B. Wood.)

7. Samuel Clarke. The Works of Samuel Clarke, D.D., late Rector of St. James's Westminster. London: J. and P. Knapton, 1738. 4 vols.

Another important early influence on Reid was Voltaire's 'veritable reasoning machine', Dr. Samuel Clarke. In the 1730s Reid read with great care Clarke's exposition of the metaphysical foundations of Newtonian natural philosophy in the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, and he also studied closely Clarke's criticisms of Anthony Collins's materialism and necessitarianism.

Case 2

8. Stephen Hales. Vegetable Staticks; or, An Account of Some Statical Experiments of the Sap in Vegetables. London: W. and J. Innys and T. Woodward, 1727.

Reid greatly admired Stephen Hales, and in his lectures he cited the Vegetable Staticks as an example of the proper application of the inductive method. Reid also seems to have adopted Hales's notion that air was a medium made up of mutually repellent particles, a theory which was itself derived from the speculations of John Freind and from Query 31 of Newton's Opticks.

9. Pierre Louis Moreau Maupertuis. La Figure de la terre, déterminée par les observations de Messieurs de Maupertuis, Clairaut, Camus .... Nouvelle édition. Paris, 1739.

In Book III, Proposition xix, of the Principia, Newton argued on the basis of his theory of gravitation that the earth was not perfectly spherical in shape, but was in fact slightly flattened at the poles. Newton's argument was later confirmed empirically by geodetic measurements made in Lapland by the French savants Maupertuis and Clairaut. Reid made detailed notes from an English translation of La Figure de la terre in November 1739.

10. Francis Hutcheson. An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in Two Treatises. London: Printed by J. Darby, for W. and J. Smith, Dublin, 1725.

Inspired by the achievements of Galileo, Newton, and a host of mathematically orientated natural philosophers in the seventeenth century, a number of eighteenth-century moral philosophers attempted

to apply mathematical techniques to the study of moral problems. One of the more famous examples occurs in Francis Hutcheson's Inquiry, where he endeavoured to calculate the degree to which an action was good or evil. Significantly, Hutcheson eliminated these calculations from later editions of the work.

11. Sir Isaac Newton. Sir Isaac Newton's Two Treatises of the Quadrature of Curves, and Analysis by Equations of an Infinite Number of Terms, Explained; Containing the Treatises Themselves, Translated into English .... By John Stewart. London: Printed by J. Bettenham, at the expence of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, 1745.

Berkeley's criticisms of the conceptual foundations of Newton's fluxional calculus in The Analyst (1734) sparked off a lively controversy, and elicited replies from the Scottish mathematicians Colin Maclaurin and John Stewart. Stewart's response indicates that Berkeley's ideas were being taken as seriously in Aberdeen as in Edinburgh, and it is likely that Stewart discussed with Reid the issues raised by Berkeley's Analyst.

12. John Theophilus Desaguliers. A Course of Experimental Philosophy. London: W. Innys, M. Senex, and T. Longman, 1744-45. 2 vols.

J. T. Desaguliers was perhaps the most influential public lecturer on science in the early eighteenth century, and Reid drew heavily on the Course for his own prelections on mechanics at King's College. Initially, Desaguliers opposed the Leibnizian measure of the force of moving bodies, mv^2, but after reconsidering the arguments of both sides in the vis viva debate, he concluded that the controversy was a dispute over words.

13. David Hume. A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects. London: J. Noon, 1739-40. 3 vols.

Like George Turnbull, Hume recommended that the experimental method be applied to the study of human nature. Moreover, Hume stressed (as did Turnbull) the dependence of natural philosophy, natural religion, mathematics, logic, criticism, politics, and morals upon the science of the mind. Such a conception of the cognitive structure of the sciences was highly influential within the Scottish universities during the Enlightenment.

14. Thomas Reid. 'An Essay on Quantity; Occasioned by Reading a Treatise, in which Simple and Compound Ratio's Are Applied to Virtue and Merit.' Philosophical Transactions 45 (1748): 505-520.

Reid's ingenious resolution of the vis viva controversy was based on the distinction found in Aristotle's Categories between proper and improper quantities. Reid argued that whereas the proper quantities of extension, duration, and number could be measured by quantities of their own kind, improper quantities like force had to be measured by the proper quantities related to them. Consequently, he insisted that when improper quantities are to be subjected to mathematical reasoning,

they must be defined such that a measure is given for them. In the case of the force of moving bodies, he admitted that mv and mv^2 were both legitimate definitions of this force, but he preferred mv to mv^2 because of its clarity, simplicity, and conformity with ordinary language.

15. Samuel Clarke. 'A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Samuel Clarke to Mr. Benjamin Hoadly, F.R.S., Occasion'd by the Present Controversy among Mathematicians Concerning the Proportion of Velocity and Force in Bodies in Motion.' Philosophical Transactions 35 (1727/28): 381-388.

Samuel Clarke was a vigorous critic of Leibniz's concept of vis viva and staunchly defended the Newtonian measure, mv. Clarke first questioned the validity of the measure mv^2 in his exchanges with Leibniz, and in his letter to Hoadly he returned to the attack, arguing that 'every Effect must necessarily be proportionate to the Cause of that Effect'. Thus he insisted that the force of a moving body was directly proportional to the velocity of motion, and hence that mv was the true measure of that force.

Case 3

16. William Porterfield. A Treatise on the Eye, the Manner and Phaenomena of Vision. Edinburgh: A. Miller, London, G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1759. 2 vols.

Porterfield's Treatise was one of the most important works on vision published in Britain during the eighteenth century. Reid used the Treatise as a source of information, but he was highly critical of Porterfield's theoretical framework and later challenged some of Porterfield's conclusions (such as his explanation of our judgment of distances) in the Inquiry.

17. Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière. Paris: De l'Imprimerie royale, 1749-1804. 44 vols.

Buffon's theory of the earth and his explanation of generation aroused intense controversy when they appeared in the late 1740s, and Reid took extensive notes from these volumes of the Histoire naturelle sometime in the 1750s. Reid was particularly concerned with refuting Buffon's views on generation, and in general he regarded the Frenchman as being an extremely heterodox thinker, as did a number of his Scottish contemporaries.

18. Euclid. The Elements of Euclid .... In this edition, the errors ... are corrected, and some of Euclid's demonstrations are restored. By Robert Simson. Glasgow: Printed by R. and A. Foulis, 1756.

Like many geometers before him, Simson attempted to rectify Euclid's problematic treatment of parallel lines in the Elements. Reid was dissatisfied with Simson's solution, but was never able to discover a satisfactory alternative.

19. René Descartes. L'Homme de René Descartes, et la formation du foetus. Seconde édition, reveuë & corrigée. Paris: T. Girard, 1677.

Reacting against animistic models of man, Descartes argued that the human body was a mere machine, and that the soul was a completely distinct substance. Cartesian mechanism lent itself to materialist reinterpretation, however, and was therefore opposed in the eighteenth century by men such as Whytt and Reid.

20. Robert Whytt. The Works of Robert Whytt. Published by his son. Edinburgh: Printed for T. Becket, and P.A. De Hondt, London, and J. Balfour, by Balfour, Auld, and Smellie, 1768.

Robert Whytt was critical of the mechanistic models of man inspired by the works of Descartes and by the iatromechanists, and also of the animism championed by Stahl and Porterfield. He was one of the first British physiologists to reject ethers and animal spirits, and to question whether the phenomena of the human body were explicable in terms of the attractive and repulsive forces active in the inanimate realm of nature. Whytt's theory of muscular irritability proved highly influential, and was tentatively adopted by Reid in the 1750s.

Case 4

21. John Gregory. A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with Those of the Animal World. London: J. Dodsley, 1765.

In his discourses given to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society and subsequently published in the Comparative View, John Gregory identified those principles of the mind which he thought differentiated man from the higher animals. Reid's 'anatomy of the mind' was probably partly inspired by Gregory's natural historical approach to the study of human nature, and Reid seems to have taken up Gregory's ideas on the relations between mind and body as well. This copy of Gregory's Comparative View was once owned by Reid's friend, the agricultural improver Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk.

22. Thomas Reid. An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense. The second edition, corrected. Edinburgh: A. Millar, London, and A. Kincaid, and J. Bell, 1765.

Based in part on discourses delivered to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, Reid's Inquiry was the most impressive critique of the theory of ideas to appear in the eighteenth century. It would seem that he originally intended to discuss all of the intellectual powers of the mind in the Inquiry, but for reasons which remain unclear he eventually narrowed the scope of the work to the examination of the five senses.

23. Thomas Reid. An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense. The third edition corrected. London: T. Cadell and T. Longman, and A. Kincaid and J. Bell, Edinburgh, 1769.

In the Inquiry, Reid was highly critical of the standard explanatory repertoire used by physiologists to explain vision. His claim that the 'vibrations of musical chords, and the undulations of animal spirits, or of aether' (p. 279) were all inadequate causes of our sensory ideas foreshadowed his later critique of David Hartley.

24. Alexander Gerard. An Essay on Taste, by Alexander Gerard. With Three Dissertations on the Same Subject by Mr. de Voltaire, Mr. d'Alembert, Mr. de Montesquieu. London: A. Millar, and A. Kincaid and J. Bell, Edinburgh, 1759.

Gerard was one of the leading members of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, and his later Essay on Genius (1774) was based on papers read to the Society in the 1760s. Affiliated with the Moderate party in the Kirk, he was active in the reform of the curriculum at Marischal College in 1753, and he remained on the faculty until 1771, when he became Professor of Divinity at King's College.

25. James Beattie. An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism. The second edition, corrected and enlarged. Edinburgh: A. Kincaid & J. Bell, and E.& C. Dilly, London, 1771.

Beattie's Essay was immensely successful, and he was lionized by polite society in London during his visit in 1773. George III 'told him he had read his book, and approved of it greatly, as a work that was much wanted, and surely would do a great deal of good'. Hume, however, was less impressed, and resented the bombastic, almost Warburtonian, style of 'that bigotted silly Fellow, Beattie'.

26. George Campbell. A Dissertation on Miracles; Containing an Examination of the Principles Advanced by David Hume, Esq., in an Essay on Miracles. Edinburgh: A. Kincaid & J. Bell, and sold by A. Millar, London, 1762.

Like Reid, George Campbell greatly admired Hume's talents as an author and metaphysician, even though he was totally opposed to Hume's philosophical principles. Having read the Dissertation in manuscript, Hume wrote to Campbell after its publication that 'it is impossible for me not to see the ingenuity of your performance, and the great learning which you have displayed against me'.

27. Nicolas Malebranche. Father Malebranche his Treatise Concerning the Search after Truth. The second edition, corrected with great exactness. London: Printed by W. Bowyer, for T. Bennet, and T. Leigh and D. Midwinter, 1700.

In the Inquiry, Reid attacked those who combined the theory of ideas with the physiological system of animal spirits, and Malebranche's Treatise provides one of the clearest examples of this admixture. Moreover, Malebranche stated explicitly those presuppositions of the theory of ideas to which Reid objected.

Case 5

28. Patrick Wilson. 'An Experiment Proposed for Determining, by the Aberration of the Fixed Stars, whether the Rays of Light in Pervading Different Media, Change their Velocity according to the Law which Results from Sir Isaac Newton's Ideas Concerning the Cause of Refraction....' Philosophical Transactions 72 (1782): 58-70.

The aberration of light was an important problem area in late eighteen-century optics, and some opticians believed that experiments on this phenomenon could decide between the rival projectile and wave theories of light. Although Wilson was certainly aware of this general theoretical issue, the experiment which he proposed was intended to test the specific claim made by Newton that the velocity of light increases when it passes from a lesser to a more refractive medium.

29. Alexander Wilson. 'Observations of the Transit of Venus over the Sun ....' Philosophical Transactions 59 (1769): 333-338.

Having observed the transit of Venus in 1761, Reid collaborated with his Glasgow colleagues Alexander Wilson, William Irvine, and John Anderson in observing a second transit which occurred in 1769. Alexander Wilson later published an important paper on the nature of sun spots in the Philosophical Transactions for 1774.

30. Adam Smith. The Theory of Moral Sentiments. London: A. Millar, and A. Kincaid and J. Bell, Edinburgh, 1759.

Though he greatly respected his predecessor, Reid rejected Smith's view that morality was largely a question of sentiment rather than judgment. In particular, Reid was critical of Smith's account of the causes of sympathy and its role in the formation of our moral beliefs.

31. Adam Smith. Essays on Philosophical Subjects, by the late Adam Smith. London: T. Cadell jun. and W. Davies, 1795.

Smith's essays on astronomy and ancient physics are elegant examples of the genre of conjectural history. Smith attempted to explain the development of the sciences in psychological terms: he claimed that theories arise as an imaginative response to the sentiments of surprise and wonder aroused in us by anomalous phenomena. Smith's analysis of the mechanisms of the mind was adopted by Reid's successor, Archibald Arthur, in an early prize-winning essay 'On the Importance of Natural Philosophy', although Arthur later converted to Reid's philosophical position.

32. John Millar. Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society. London: Printed by W. and J. Richardson, for J. Murray, 1771.

John Millar was sympathetic to Hume's philosophical ideas, and turned to history to illustrate the fundamental principles of human nature. Millar thought his Observations illustrated the 'natural history of mankind' by revealing the connections between the state of a society and its manners, laws, and system of government.

33. Joseph Black. Lectures on the Elements of Chemistry, Delivered in the University of Edinburgh, by the late Joseph Black. Now published from his manuscripts, by John Robison. Edinburgh: Printed by Mundel and Son, for Longman and Rees, London, and W. Creech, 1803. 2 vols.

Joseph Black was unquestionably the most distinguished Scottish chemist of the eighteenth century. Reid held his work in great esteem, and regarded Black's 1756 essay 'Experiments upon Magnesia Alba, Quicklime, and Some Other Alcaline Substances', as being a masterly example of the use of the inductive method. As editor of Black's lectures, Robison was obsessed with defending Black's priority in discovering the theory of latent heat and with ensuring that Black's reputation was not eclipsed by that of the other giant of eighteenth-century chemistry, Lavoisier.

34. George Jardine. Outlines of Philosophical Education, Illustrated by the Method of Teaching the Logic, or First Class of Philosphy, in the University of Glasgow. Glasgow: Printed by A. & J. Duncan, 1818.

Soon after his election to the Chair in 1774, George Jardine extensively remodelled the logic and metaphysics course at Glasgow. He broadened the scope of the course to include lectures on the powers of the mind, language, the inductive method, and taste. Like Reid, Jardine was convinced of the superiority of a Scottish university education over that available in England, and he argued his case in the concluding sections of the Outline.

(Loaned by Queen's University Library.)

Case 6

35. Thomas Reid. Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man. Edinburgh: J. Bell, and G.G.J. & J. Robinson, London, 1785.

One of the more notable features of the Essays was the novel interpretation of Newton's First Rule of Philosophizing which Reid employed to attack the use of hypotheses in the sciences of mind and matter. This copy of the Essays was owned and annotated by John Robison, who likewise censured the use of hypotheses, and who also condemned the theories of Priestley as groundless conjectures.

36. Richard Price. A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, in a Correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley. London: J. Johnson and T. Cadell, 1778.

Although Price was one of Priestley's closest associates, he could not accept Priestley's materialist and necessitarian views. Philosophically, Price was much closer to Reid, whose works he praised in his Review of the Principal Questions of Morals and with whom he corresponded. Some of Reid's criticisms of Priestley's materialism in his 'Observations on the Modern System of Materialism' echo those published by Price in the Free Discussion.

37. Sir Isaac Newton. Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica. Editio ultima, auctior et emendatior. Amstaelodami: Sumptibus Societatis, 1714.

While Priestley claimed that materialism was sanctioned by Newton's Rules of Philosophizing, Reid argued in his 'Observations on the Modern System of Materialism' that the Dissenter had seriously distorted the sense of those Rules and that, when properly understood, they could not be used to legitimate Priestley's theory of matter.

38. Joseph Priestley. Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit. London: J. Johnson, 1777.

In the Disquisitions Priestley outlined his new theory of matter. Whereas Newton, for example, had held that matter was an inert, extended, and impenetrable substance, Priestley believed that the powers of attraction and repulsion were intrinsic to matter and that it was penetrable. Moreover, Priestley argued that the notion of an immaterial soul was a heathen corruption of primitive Christianity and that materialism was in fact true Christian doctrine.

39. Joseph Priestley. Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, on the Principle of the Association of Ideas. The second edition. London: J. Johnson, 1790.

Priestley first suggested that matter could possess the power of thought in the introductory essays to his edition of David Hartley's Observations on Man, first published in 1775. While some scholars have argued that Priestley became a materialist because he thought the problem of mind-body interaction was insuperable, his remarks here indicate that his materialism may have been rooted in his scientific investigations as well.

(Loaned by P.B. Wood.)

40. Joseph Priestley. An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion. The second edition. London: J. Johnson, 1775.

Priestley may have been prompted to launch his attack on Reid, Beattie, and Oswald for social reasons. In the early 1770s Reid's Inquiry enjoyed wide circulation, and in 1773 James Beattie was granted a state pension by George III. At the same time, Dissenting ministers in London were campaigning for relief from subscribing to the Thirty-Nine Articles. Passages in the Examination suggest that Priestley feared that if common sense philosophy were to gain acceptance, especially at court, then the campaign by the Dissenters would be endangered, as the irrationalist tenets of the Scottish philosophers could be used against the rational religion of his Dissenting brethren.

41. Thomas Reid. Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man. Edinburgh: J. Bell, and G.G.J. & J. Robinson, 1785. (another copy)

Reid's first volume of essays was derived from his Glasgow pneumatology lectures and various discourses read to the Glasgow Literary Society in the early 1770s. Although Dugald Stewart claimed that Reid's Inquiry served as an 'introduction' to the two later Essays, the relationship between these works is far more complex and cannot be so straightforwardly characterised.

Case 7

42. Henry Home, Lord Kames. The Gentleman Farmer; Being an Attempt to Improve Agriculture, by Subjecting it to the Test of Rational Principles. The second edition, with considerable additions. Edinburgh: J. Bell, 1779.

In the mid-1770s Reid and Kames corresponded on the topic of generation, and Reid put forward the view that initially all living things exist in miniature in what he called 'organised atoms'. Reid believed that once these atoms were placed in their proper matrix, they then gradually unfolded and eventually developed into mature plants or animals. Kames was unconvinced by this theory, and criticised it in his agricultural tract, The Gentleman Farmer.

43. James Gregory. Philosophical and Literary Essays. Edinburgh: Sold by T. Cadell, London, and W. Creech, 1792. 2 vols.

One of Reid's closest associates in his last years was James Gregory, John Gregory's son and successor in the Edinburgh medical faculty. The principal aim of Gregory's Essays was to refute necessitarianism by demonstrating the differences in the relations between cause and effect, and motives and actions. Although Reid was sympathetic to Gregory's aim, he questioned Gregory's use of mathematical reasoning to prove metaphysical propositions.

44. James Gregory. Theory of the Moods of Verbs. From the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Edinburgh [1790?]

For various reasons, in the eighteenth century Scottish philosophers became extremely interested in the study of language. Reid thought that the structure of language reflected the common sense beliefs of mankind, and employed linguistic evidence to support his theory of causation. Gregory made similar appeals, and used his analysis of verbs to combat such philosophical positions as solipsism.

45. Thomas Reid. Essays on the Active Powers of Man. Edinburgh: J. Bell, and G.G.J. and J. Robinson, London, 1788.

Reid's second volume of essays is notable primarily for his detailed exposition of his theory of causation, and his defence of the concept of free will against such critics as Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Priestley. Significantly, Reid's description of the principles of action in man is written in the same natural historical mode as his 'anatomy' of the intellectual powers of the mind.

46. Thomas Reid. Essays on the Active Powers of Man. Edinburgh: J. Bell, and G.G.J. and J. Robinson, London, 1788. (John Robison's copy.)

Whereas Hume had denied that we have any true idea of active power, Reid in his essay 'Of the Notion of Active Power' argued that we do in fact have a limited conception of such powers as well as a belief, rooted in our constitution, in our possession of some degree of active power. In the section annotated by John Robison, Reid appealed to the evidence of language to illustrate our basic notions of action and activity.

47. Thomas Reid. 'A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic, with Remarks.' In Sketches of the History of Man, vol. 2, pp. 168-241. By Henry Home, Lord Kames. Edinburgh: W. Creech, and W. Strahan and T. Cadell, London, 1774.

Although they were often at odds philosophically, Reid and his patron Lord Kames were on close personal terms from 1764 until Kames's death in 1782. In this essay on Aristotle's logic, which Kames commissioned in the mid-1760s, Reid outlined the place of logic in a liberal education, and stressed the need to enumerate and clarify the first principles of knowledge. Reid's conception of logic was thus shaped by his epistemology, which emphasised the fundamental role of the principles of common sense in our reasoning.

Case 8

48. John Robison. Proofs of a Conspiracy against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies. London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, and W. Creech, Edinburgh, 1797.

John Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy was an extreme expression of the fear of sedition aroused in Britain by the French Revolution. According to Robison, the revolutionary ferment in Europe was the work of Freemasons, illuminati, and philosophes who combined irreligion and philosophical heterodoxy with subversive political views. Robison also singled out Joseph Priestley for attack, condemning the Dissenter's materialism and politics.

(Loaned by E. Campbell-McIntosh, Esq.)

49. Three Dissertations on Metaphysical, Mathematical, and Chemical Philosophy, since the Revival of Letters in Europe. By Dugald Stewart, John Playfair, and William Thomas Brande. 1822.

Stewart's Dissertation was less a disinterested history of early modern philosophy than an extended polemic against materialism, necessitarianism, and Kantianism. Historiographically, one of Stewart's most noteworthy innovations was his use of the notion of a national 'school' of Scottish philosophy, a notion which was highly influential in the nineteenth century. Stewart here judged Reid to be the most important thinker of the generation of Scottish metaphysicians after Hume, and

through his narrative structure he implied that Reid was in the vanguard of the progress of metaphysics during the Enlightenment.

50. Sir John Sinclair. The Statistical Account of Scotland. Edinburgh: Printed and sold by W. Creech, and also sold by J. Donaldson, 1791-99. 21 vols.

Reid's involvement in the endless faculty disputes and in the administration of the college gave him an intimate knowledge of its constitution and customs, and this he put to good use in his 'Statistical Account of the University of Glasgow'. His characteristic pedagogical concerns emerge in his description of university structure and practice, though for the first time Reid here reflected adversely on the quality of education available at Oxford and Cambridge.

51. James Denholm. The History of the City of Glasgow and Suburbs: Compiled from Authentic Records and Other Respectable Authorities. Second edition. Glasgow: R. Chapman, and Stewart and Meikle, 1798.

In his Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, Daniel Defoe described Glasgow University thus: 'the building is the best of any in Scotland of the kind.... It is a very spacious building, contains two large squares, or courts, and the lodgings for the scholars, and for the professors, are very handsome; the whole building is of freestone, very high and very august'. Unfortunately, the University as Reid knew it was largely demolished in the late nineteenth century to make way for a railway line.

52. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier. Traité élémentaire de chimie, présenté dans un ordre nouveau et d'après les découvertes modernes. Seconde édition. Paris: Cuchet, 1793. 2 vols.

During the late 1780s, Reid began to study the latest chemical works issuing from France, and in 1790 he made extensive notes from Robert Kerr's English translation of Lavoisier's Traité, published that year in Edinburgh. Reid was particularly interested in Lavoisier's concept of chemical elements and in the Frenchman's speculations on the nature of heat.

53. John Anderson. Process of Declarator MDCCLXXV, Concerning the Management of the Revenue of Glasgow College; and Concerning a Vote in the Comitia of the University of Glasgow. Glasgow, 1778.

Reid and Anderson were regularly at loggerheads with the Principal of the College, William Leechman, and the Shaw Park affair was one of the more extraordinary episodes in the life of the University during the eighteenth century. This copy of the Process was once owned by the businessman George Oswald of Scotstoun, an acquaintance of Reid's and the son of the Rev. James Oswald, author of An Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion.

54. Dugald Stewart. 'Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid.' In his Biographical Memoirs, of Adam Smith, LL.D., of William Robertson, D.D., and of Thomas Reid, D.D. Edinburgh: Printed by G. Ramsay and Co., for W. Creech, Bell and Bradfute, 1811.

The first major, and probably the most influential, biography of Reid was Dugald Stewart's 'Account', which was read at various meetings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1802 and was first published in 1803. For a variety of reasons, Stewart portrayed Reid as a disinterested savant unaffected by the political and social developments of his time, and whose primary interests were epistemology and morals. Closer examination of the available evidence reveals that this image of Reid is a misleading one.

55. John Robison. 'On the Motion of Light, as Affected by Refracting and Reflecting Substances, which Are Also in Motion.' Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh 2 (1790): 83-111.

Prompted by the theories of his friend Patrick Wilson and of the distinguished natural philosopher Boscovich, John Robison began his own investigations into the aberration of light. Boscovich had earlier proposed a crucial experiment which he thought would decide between the rival projectile and wave theories of light, but Robison discovered that Boscovich's reasoning was incorrect. Reid read Robison's paper prior to its publication, and whole-heartedly endorsed his ex-colleague's conclusions.

56. Sir James Mackintosh. Vindiciae Gallicae: Defence of the French Revolution and its English Admirers, against the Accusations of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke. The fourth edition, with additions. London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1792.

Mackintosh's Vindiciae Gallicae was perhaps the most notable contemporary reply to Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France. As a staunch Whig, Mackintosh defended the revolutionary cause and its British sympathisers, and invoked the example of the Glorious Revolution in his arguments against Burke. Reid apparently admired greatly the Vindiciae and thought that it was 'one of the most ingenious works of [that] kind he had ever met with'.

West Reading Room

57. Sir Henry Raeburn. Portrait of Thomas Reid.

(Loaned by the Art Gallery of Ontario.)

58. James Tassie. Paste glass medallion portrait of Thomas Reid. 1791.

(Loaned by the Royal Ontario Museum. Knox College Collection.)

'A picture of him, for which he consented, at the particular request of Dr. Gregory, to sit to Mr. Raeburn, during his last visit to Edinburgh, is generally and justly ranked among the happiest performances of that excellent artist. The medallion of Tassie, also, for which he sat in the eighty-first year of his age, presents a very perfect resemblance.' - Dugald Stewart, 'Account', p. 507.

59. Sir Henry Raeburn. Portrait of Martha Reid, daughter of Thomas Reid.

(Loaned by the Art Gallery of Ontario.)

'The only surviving descendant of Dr. Reid is Mrs. Carmichael, a daughter worthy in every respect of such a father:— long, the chief comfort and support of his old age, and his anxious nurse in his last moments.' -Stewart, p. 506.